

October 18, 2016

Senator Shiozawa and Representative Edwards:

Thank you for your continued support of the STEM Action Center. Emery County School District was recently awarded a grant for Computer Programming and Robotics of nearly \$200,000 through the STEM Action Center. The support of the STEM Action Center was critical in developing our computer programming pathway. We are a small school district and unable to hire a grant writer like larger school districts. Without the guidance of the STEM Action Center through every step of the process, it would have been highly unlikely for our district to receive a grant of this impact that was written solely by a high school counselor.

When we initially started the grant application in 2014, we planned to apply for funding to pay for a single introduction to computer programming course. Through the process of working with the STEM Action Center, the entire focus of the Emery County School District evolved towards becoming more technology driven throughout all grade levels and departments. The funding created robotics clubs from kindergarten through 12th grade, introduction to computer coding camps for all grade levels, a high school computer programming course, and CNC Simulator software and a 3D printer for our CTE courses. This grant has greatly advanced our goal of improving technology skills for all students while ultimately helping them to be more prepared for the challenges of the future.

Through our collaboration with the STEM Action Center, we were able to send a teacher to the code.org training which would not have been possible without such connections since we were past the enrollment window for the program. This training was essential and relevant in advancing the skills of the instructor and critical to the success of the Computer Programming course as it relates to our students.

This grant not only benefits students that are traditionally associated with STEM careers, i.e. those that receive a 4-year college degree, but also the large population of Emery High graduates that enter trade programs and careers upon graduation. Students enrolled in machining, welding, and CAD classes will receive computer programming experience through the purchase of CNC Simulator software and a 3D Printer. This experience will improve their skillsets and make them more employable. Not only will this benefit the individual students enrolled in these courses, but it could possibly attract large companies to our area that require such skill sets. This certainly has the potential of a win-win for the Emery District stakeholders and the Emery County economy.

One huge impact that the STEM Action Center has had on our vision was to help us shift our focus toward a larger scale goal of improving our declining economy. Without the STEM Action Center requiring that we work with local companies and government, we would not have realized that our goals already closely align with these entities. We now all have a unified goal of increasing individual students' technology skills so that they may contribute to attracting companies to our area which will ultimately improve our economy.

If we had simply been given the money without going through the grant application process, we would not have benefited from meaningful STEM connections while being less thoughtful about how to best allocate the funds. The support we received through the entire grant writing process

was critical to our outcome. The STEM Action Center provided us with feedback and suggestions to continually improve the grant proposal to meet the needs of our students and local economy as well as the expansion of our vision to include all students. Our STEM partners were always available to help with even the most basic questions while providing us with connections and resources that would not have been possible for us to obtain otherwise. We plan to continue working with the STEM Action Center to help other rural school districts obtain similar funding. For these reasons, we encourage you to continue your support of the STEM Action Center.

Sincerely,

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